

Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Original) A process for the preparation of monochloroacetic acid from chlorine and acetic acid in the presence of a catalyst by reactive distillation.
2. (Original) A process according to claim 1 wherein a reactive distillation apparatus is used, the apparatus comprising a reactive distillation column comprising at least one column internal, which column is on one side connected to a cooler unit and on the other side connected to a reboiler, and which apparatus is provided with a first inlet for supplying chlorine, a second inlet for supplying acetic acid, a third inlet for supplying the catalyst, a first outlet for removing the MCA-containing product, and a second outlet for recovering the catalyst, whereby the first inlet and the outlet are positioned closer to the reboiler than the second and the third inlets, and whereby the second outlet is connected to the cooler unit, the process comprising the steps of supplying chlorine via the first inlet, supplying acetic acid via the second inlet, supplying the catalyst via the third inlet, recovering the catalyst via the second outlet, and removing the MCA-containing product via the first outlet.
3. (Currently Amended) A process according to ~~claim 1-any one of claims 1 and 2~~ wherein the catalyst is acetyl chloride.
4. (Currently Amended) A process according to ~~claim 1-any one of the preceding claims~~ wherein the applied pressure is at least $0.5 \cdot 10^5$ and at most $10 \cdot 10^5$ Pa.

5. (Currently Amended) A process according to claim 1—any one of the preceding claims wherein the mass ratio of chlorine to acetic acid is at least 0.1 and at most 2.0.
6. (Currently Amended) A process according to claim 1—any one of the preceding claims wherein the mass ratio of acetic anhydride to acetic acid is at least 0.0001 and at most 0.25.
7. (Currently Amended) A process according to claim 1—any one of the preceding claims wherein the column internal is a tray, whereby the number of trays is at least 1 and at most 80.
8. (Currently Amended) A process according to claim 1—any one of the preceding claims wherein the liquid residence time in the reactive distillation column is at least 0.1 and at most 5 hours.
9. (Currently Amended) A process according to claim 2—any one of claims 2–8 wherein the second inlet is positioned close to the cooler unit.
10. (Currently Amended) A process according to claim 1—any one of the preceding claims wherein the process is conducted continuously.

11. (Currently Amended) A process according to ~~claim 1-any one of the preceding claims~~ |
wherein a diluting gas is added, the diluting gas being selected from the group
consisting of hydrochloric acid, an inert gas such as nitrogen or helium, or a mixture thereof.